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IHE-Europe Connects More Nations, More Systems

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The arrival of the European Connectathon in Istanbul April 15 marks a significant milestone for Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE).

The critical mass powerfully demonstrates the scope and reach of the IHE movement towards interoperability in healthcare.

Launched 13 years ago in Europe with the first 'connectivity marathon' in France, the drive to a standard-based exchange of patient information has steadily gathered more national initiatives to finally reach the very eastern edge of the continent.

The momentum continues at this year's Connectathon with visits of delegations from the Middle East, reinforcing the theme "Connecting Where The Continents Meet."

The third annual Projectathon for the largescale project Smart Open Services for European Patients (epSOS) with 24 participating nations will be run concurrent with Connectathon on the testing floor.

Testing for both the Projectathon and the European Connectathon will be managed by IHEServices that recently began offering customised testing for interoperability to vendors and regional health IT programs.

The first-ever IHE World Summit, to be held April 16-19 in Istanbul, represents a crowning achievement in the IHE mission to drive the adoption of interoperability by building industry consensus and educating developers and users. The summit offers three concurrent tracks aimed at specific levels of interest in IHE deployments: the high-level Panel track, the Management track and the Developer track.

According to Prof. Dr. Utku Senol from the Akdeniz University School of Medicine, who organized the ambitious program, the mix of scientific sessions, panel discussions and how-to instruction brings together people from different fields to create unexpected opportunities for interaction.

The core testing activity among 300 software engineers at Connectathon shows how far IHE has grown beyond its roots in radiology to include technical frameworks and integration profiles for nine healthcare domains, including lab, pharmacy and even ophthalmology. Radiology continues to make up almost half of the tests performed at Connectathon. This year validation to the IHE Mammography integration profile will be a highlight in this large domain.

Today testing of cross-enterprise sharing, which facilitates management of electronic health records, accounts for the greatest number of tests at Connectathon. Cross-enterprise Document Workflow (XDW) will be the hot area for testing activity this year.

For more information on Connectathon 2013, please visit **www.cat2013.org**

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